

Case 2608

Vespa triangulum Fabricius, 1775 (currently *Philanthus triangulum*, Insecta, Hymenoptera): proposed conservation of the specific name.

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the conservation of the specific name *triangulum* Fabricius, 1775 in the sphecid wasp genus *Philanthus* by the suppression of the unused senior synonym *Vespa ruspatrix* Linnaeus, 1767. The species is a predator of honeybees and often known as the 'bee-wolf'.

1. Linnaeus (1767, p. 951) gave the name *Vespa ruspatrix* for a species found 'in Africa'. The species remained, unidentified, in *Vespa* until Day (1979, p. 71) studied the holotype and found it to be identical with a well-known sphecid, *Philanthus triangulum* (Fabricius, 1775). Day commented that 'workers with an interest in the taxonomy of the Sphecidae will doubtless wish to consider the advisability of seeking suppression of this name [*ruspatrix*] in view of the frequency of usage in biological texts of its junior synonym. *P. triangulum* (F.).'

2. Only two subsequent authors have mentioned the specific name *ruspatrix*. Menke (1986, p. 21) noted Day's (1979) report and quoted his comments on the synonymy, and Vikberg (1986, p. 78) used it as a valid name in his checklist of Finnish Aculeata.

3. Fabricius (1775, p. 373) described a new species *Vespa triangulum* and (1790, p. 224) transferred it to his genus *Philanthus*. Van der Vecht (1961, p. 61) studied the holotype of *Vespa triangulum* and confirmed that the name is at present interpreted correctly.

4. *Philanthus triangulum* is a widely distributed species, ranging from South Africa to northern Europe, east to Iran, Kazakh SSR and Turkmen SSR. This wasp uses honeybees exclusively as food for the larvae and is a serious apicultural pest in many areas. The name *triangulum* has been commonly used in faunal, taxonomic, apicultural, and toxicological literature. Dalla Torre (1897, p. 491-493) lists 31 citations for the period 1790-1893 (he omitted no fewer than nine citations for that time), and I know of at least 128 uses by 67 authors between 1937-1987. A list of the 1937-1987 citations is held by the Commission Secretariat.

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *ruspatrix* Linnaeus, 1767, as published in the binomen *Vespa ruspatrix*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *triangulum* Fabricius, 1775, as published in the binomen *Vespa triangulum*:

- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *ruspatrix* Linnaeus, 1767, as published in the binomen *Vespa ruspatrix* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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Note added in proof: A similar application has also been received from Dr R. T. Simon Thomas of the *Instituut voor Taxonomische Zoologie, afd. Entomologie, Plantage Middenlaan 64, 1018 DH Amsterdam, The Netherlands.*